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A NARRATIVE of the LIFE, TRIAL, and horrid EXECUTION of ROBERT FRANCIS DAMIENS, who attempted to murder the present KING of France.

Extracted from the Account of this extraordinary Affair just published in Paris, by Authority, in four Volumes.

ROBERT FRANCIS DAMIENS was born January 9, 1715, in a Hamlet of Artois, called Tieuloy, about a league and a half from St. Pol. His father's name was Peter-Joseph Damiens, a plain labouring Man. His mother's maiden name was Guillemant. The marriage of this couple produced ten children, all of whom died before the year 1733, except four, viz. Anthony-Joseph Damiens, wool-comber, who married and settled at St. Omers; Robert-Francis Damiens, the criminal; Lewis Damiens, a servant at Paris; and a Girl called Mary-Cathrine, who married Charles Collet, a carpenter of St. Omers.

Robert-Francis Damiens having lost his mother, was placed out to service, at one Petit's in the said village of Tieuloy; where he staid but a short time. His great-uncle by the mother's side, called James-Lewis Guillemant, who kept a public-house at Bethune, was so kind as to take charge of him. He might then be about sixteen. From his tenderest youth he had always shewed himself incorrigible, and was nick-named in the country, for his diabolical temper, *Robert the Devil*.

His Uncle Guillemant had him taught reading and writing; but his disregard to his learning engaged his uncle to put him prentice to one Beauvante, a locksmith in Bethune. There he staid but a short time, and liking himself for a soldier, his uncle had the charity to procure his discharge for 400 livres, (about 16 l.)

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This new mark of his uncle's goodness did not render Damiens more tractable. He soon after left his uncle, who never saw him afterwards, and who died in 1747.

After leaving Bethune, Damiens came to Arras. There, as he said, he staid sometime at the abby of St. Vast, to learn cookery. However, he certainly towards the year 1733, entered into the service of Monsr. Dubas, a Swiss officer, with whom he made a campaign at the siege of Philipsburgh. From thence he passed directly into the service of the Count of Raymond, with whom he went a Journey to Bavaria; and on his return, not caring to go with the Count to his estate in Angoulême, he entered servant to the Refectory of the Jesuits college of Lewis-le-grand at Paris, on the recommendation of John-Francis Neveu, a very distant relation of his, at that time Steward of the college. He staid there about fifteen months; at the end of which, for non-submission to a punishment he had incurred, he was turned off. After this he went into several places, for the space of about a year, when he presented himself to the college, and desired to be taken in again. He was so, and obtained the permission of serving some particular chambers of boarders.

He staid about fourteen or fifteen Months in this place, during which time it was remarked that he spoke little, was rather passionate, and very much disposed to be refractory towards his superiors.

Towards the year 1738 he got acquainted with Elizabeth Mollerienne, a native of Metz, then in the service of the Countess of Crusol, at Paris. This Woman he married, about the beginning of the year 1739, and had by her two children; the one a boy, who died young; the other a Girl called Mary-Elizabeth, who was brought up by her mother, and latterly gained her livelihood by colouring Images.

This marriage obliged Damiens to quit his service at the college, when he took a lodging for his wife in St. Stephen's cloisters, where she lived till September 1756; and then she went into service, as a cook. As to her husband, he ran through a number of services. His natural inconstancy, and violence of temper, occasioned these frequent changes. It would be needless to particularize all the places in which he lived. It is enough to observe, that he successively served masters of all ranks and conditions. According to sundry depositions on his trial, it appears that he could, if he pleased, be a good servant; that he was shy of the company of his comrades, full of vanity, desirous of signalizing himself; a keen news-monger, of a seditious turn, yet generally speaking preserved his character for taciturnity except when he gave way to his itch of commenting upon the publick news; for this we have the testimony of one Desvaux, (vol. ii. page 264.) who represents him as a great prater on that subject. He would often talk to himself, and mutter inwardly; was obstinate in the pursuit of whatever he had projected, and daring in the execution of it; impudent; addicted to lying; sensible himself of the weakness of his blood and occasionally



sionally seeking to calm it. His figure was somewhat answerable to his character: he was of a tall stature, his face somewhat long, his look bold and piercing, his nose rather hooked like a parrot's bill, or aquiline, than what is understood by the Roman nose; his mouth sunk in, and had contracted a quivering motion, from his habit of talking to himself.

July 4, 1756, Damiens, under the name of Flamand, went in to service to one Monf. Michel, a Russian merchant, then at Paris. On the 6th of the said month, Mr. Michel, on going out about his affairs, left Damiens at his lodgings, with orders to wait for him; but on his return, he found that his new servant was gone. This created a suspicion, which was soon confirmed by missing two hundred and fifty Louis d'ores. Mr. Michel immediately concluded that the robbery must have been committed by his servant, made his complaint to the Commissary Laurencin; but, on the evening of the day of the robbery, Damiens took post from Paris to Arras, where resting some hours at an inn, he repaired to the village of Hermanville, lay there two nights, and from thence he went to two of his Aunts, who were married to Adbert and Lewis Platel.

July 8, he returned to Arras, and presented a petition against his relations by his mother's side, with whom he had some disputes about family business. On the evening of the same day he left Arras again, just touched at Bethune, and the next day to Courjoyeux near St. Omers.

July 10, he came early in the morning to St. Omers, and went to enquire for his Brother, Joseph Anthony Damiens, with whom he designed to lodge; but not finding the house commodious, or well enough furnished, he went to his sister Collet's, where he fixed his abode.

The 11th he went to Areq near St. Omers, where his father was porter to the Provostship dependant on the abby of St. Berin, and returned the same day to St. Omers. The 12th and 13th he employed himself in making different purchases: he gave his sister fifty-four livres (about two guineas) towards keeping a better table. To his brother Joseph Anthony he gave three hundred livres to buy him wool, for carrying on his trade. The 14th Joseph Anthony received from Paris a letter from his brother Lewis, acquainting him with the robbery committed on Mr. Michel by their brother Robert Francis Damiens, and of the pursuits of justice on this account.

Joseph Anthony, without delay, apprised Damiens of this news; at which he fell into the greatest fury, and it was with difficulty that they could calm it;—he grew sick and doubtless thro' a fit of despair, he swallowed a considerable over-dose of an emetic, which had a most violent effect, but which however was got over; by proper remedies.

It was then that Joseph Anthony, who has the character of being an honest man exhorted him to restore what he had taken from

from his late master; and tried to prevail on him to put himself under the direction of the Sieur Fenes, a Curate of St. Omers. To this, Damiens never would consent; and laughed both at his brother's devotion, and at the offer of a spiritual guide.

During his stay at St. Omers he conversed only with his own family; went rarely to mass on Sundays and Holidays, and openly ridiculed his brothers and sister, for staying too long, according to his notions at church.

Being thoroughly recovered, and expressing a desire to go to Dunkirk, his brother Anthony, and sister Collet, were kind enough to accompany him thither; to watch him, lest he should do himself any mischief. They arrived at Dunkirk on the 22d of July, and took up their residence with a relation of the widow Collet's. The 24th, Joseph-Anthony returned to St. Omers, to fetch a coat that had been bought by Damiens, who staid behind with his sister; and both together went to Fort Mardyke, where they passed the day with the sluice-keeper. The next day they returned to Dunkirk; and on the 26th Joseph-Anthony returned to St. Omers, with an air of great confusion and perplexity, and acquainted Damiens that a warrant was certainly come from Paris to take him up. On this the two brothers went off in a hurry, without taking leave of their landlord, and took the road of St. Venant; from whence, on the 27th, Joseph-Anthony returned to St. Omers, for the clock-makers had left there, and rejoined him on the 31st.

On the first of August the two brothers separated; and Damiens stopped at an inn in Zutnoland, just by Poperingue. Here he went by his mother's name; and staid at this inn till the 9th, during which time he had himself bled. His landlady going by chance into his room, found him weltering in his blood, though he did not seem in a swoon. He told her his bandage had loosed of itself (tho' it was afterwards judged to be of his own doing) and it was immediately taken care of. The rest of the time he passed partly in bed, where he lay late, and partly at cards with a grenadier in the Queen of Hungary's troops, called Morel.

The 9th of August he went to Poperingue; staid four days at the Pelican; and then changed that lodging for another at Petronilla Hameau's, a mercer's, where he lay for about fifteen days, in the same room with one Playoust, a stocking-frame weaver. It was to this Playoust that he made use of these words. *If I return to France—Yes I will return thither; I shall die there, and the greatest man of the earth shall die also; I will do something to be talked of.* Words that characterize the man perfectly.

September 10, a Town-beadle having acquainted Damiens that the Magistrate wanted to speak with him, he left Poperingue that afternoon; and on the 12th he came to Cœurjoyeux, near St. Omers. From thence he went to Arcq, to see his father, who sent for his son Joseph-Anthony, and his daughter Collet: with whom Damiens had a dispute, wanting to take back about fourteen Lew- idores

idores he had put into his sister's hands, and three hundred livres from Joseph-Anthony: but as they, by the advice of the Curate Fenés before-mentioned, had actually taken effectual measures to restore this money to Mr. Michel, they would not return it to him.

Nothing happened to Damiens worth notice, till the 3d of December 1756, when, at Arras, he ended his disputes with his family, and received about 400 livres.

From the 9th to the 20th he passed his time at a publick-house in Arras, gaming and drinking, with his usual taciturnity, scarce ever entering into conversation. The 20th he was let blood at his lodgings, desiring the surgeon to make a large orifice; and for several days he took opium. The 21st he went to a relation's at Fallesque near Arras, and talked like a mad-man, saying, *that the kingdom, that his wife and daughter were ruined.* He staid at Fallesque till the 23d. The 25th he left his lodging at Saquet's, and came to the French Arms, an inn from which the stages set out for Paris, and took a place in the coach, for which he was booked under the name of Breval.---The 28th he set out in the coach for Paris, with three passengers, with whom it did not appear that he had the least connection.---The 31st he arrived at St. Martin's Hall, where he took a hackney-coach, and had the civility to set down a young gentleman, one of the passengers, at a house to which he was recommended. At three in the afternoon he went to a public-house in Beaubourg-street, where he waited for his brother Lewis Damiens, then a servant in a family in Simon-le-franc-street. This brother soon came, and was greatly surprized to see him; Damiens having taken care that he should not know before-hand who it was that had sent for him.

Lewis reproached him with his imprudence in returning to Paris, after the robbery he had committed, of which complaint had been made to Justice. Damiens assured him he should not stay long, and desired him to recommend to him some inn to lodge at. This his brother declining, he enquired of him where his wife was; and was told she was in a cook's place, at Madam Ripandelly's in St. Nicholas church-yard-street.

After this conversation the two brothers parted. Damiens went at five to Madam Ripandelly's. The Lady's woman, Mace, opened the door to him, and knew him again, having formerly boarded with his wife, before Damiens went out of town. She told him his wife was gone out, but that he might wait her return in the kitchen; and according he did so. When his wife came in, she was surprized to see him. He told her, he should not stay long, but would return to Arras; upon which she determined to let him lie in her chamber, without acquainting her mistress.

The next day being the first of the new year 1757, the daughter of Damiens being apprized of her father's arrival, came about eleven o'clock and found him yet in bed. The next day, January the 2d, she returned with a woman (a friend of her mother's) called

ed Wattebled, a Sempstress; and they both reproached Damiens with his return, which exposed him to be taken up for his robbery: Wattebled especially made him a very sensible exhortation upon this subject. On the evening towards seven o'clock, Damiens and his wife went from Madam Ripandelly's to see their daughter and Wattebled safe home, who both lodged at St. Stephen's. On the way they both stopped at a beer-house, in St. Martin's-street, near St. Medrick. There these women reiterated their request to him, to leave Paris instantly. He promised he would, and bid Wattebled an eternal farewell.

The next day towards eight o'clock in the evening, Damiens left the house of Madam Ripandelly, in company with his wife and daughter, who saw him as far as St. Martin's-street, where he took his leave of them, after assuring them, that he would return instantly into his own country.

It is hard to ascertain what Damiens did between half an hour past eight in the evening, when he left his wife, to eleven, when he came to the carriage-office for Versailles, where he hired a chaise, and arrived at Versailles about three in the morning of the 4th of January. — He staid at the post-office there till seven; and after having drank some ratafia with the coachman, and the waiter at the post-office, for which he paid very freely, he slept soundly for about two hours. As soon as he waked, he directed this waiter to direct him to an inn; and upon his recommending Fortier in Sartory-street, he took up his lodging there. As he had no bundle, Mrs. Fortier required of him to give her earnest for his expences, which he did. After drinking a glass of wine, he went to bed, and lay till about two in the afternoon, then having put on his cloaths, he went out of the inn, and it does not clearly appear how he disposed of himself just afterwards. He pretended, that he had spent part of his time in the park, the courts, and in drinking at a public-house in the street of the Recollects; but whatever enquiry could be made as to this matter, there was no arriving at any certainty.

The same day, Tuesday the 4th, he returned to his inn at Fortier's, and flew into a rage at his coming in, saying, *there is no dispatching of business at that cursed Versailles*; and that the King was going again to Trianon till the next Saturday. Afterwards he called for a fowl, but took up with some mutton, that was offered him; and after eating a bit went to bed.

January the 5th, 1757. the fatal day! Mrs. Fortier going up by chance into his room, about eleven o'clock, he desired her to send for a surgeon to bleed him; it was then exceeding cold weather, and he believing he was jesting with her, answered him on the same footing. He has since in his interrogatories before the court, when confronted with the said Fortier, insisted, *that if he had been bled, as he desired, he had not committed that crime.*

However that may be, having dressed himself about two o'clock, he left Fortier's inn. From four o'clock he was seen to saunter about the courts of the Castle; which he owns. One of the

the guards of the gate declared, that being on duty under the archway that leads to the apartment of the Princesses, he saw a person, whom he since knew to be Damiens: that this person was accosted by another, unknown, a thin man, about five feet high, who said to Damiens, as he came up to him, *Well?* To which Damiens answered, *Well, I am waiting.* Damiens pretends, that this guard of the gate has inverted the order of the dialogue, for it was himself who said *Well*; and that it was the other who answered, *Well, I am waiting.* Damiens being pressed to declare who this person was, pretended that it was one who was soliciting permission to make a publick shew of a machine. Perquisitions were made thereon, but this man, who is known, has no resemblance to the description furnished by the guard of the gate, being above five feet and a half high, and of a thick make. Damiens, in the whole course of his examination, persisted in what he had declared to this purport. [The person described by the guard, was, as before remarked, thin, and of a stature at most of five feet; about 35 or 40 years of age; his hair in bag, his coat brown, and rather thread-bare, with a plain hat; but though a person somewhat answering this description was taken up on suspicion, after the execution of Damiens, nothing has yet appeared to convict him; and in truth the most probable opinion is, that Damiens had no accomplice, or abettor, in his desperate attempt.]

On the afternoon of the same day, Wednesday the 9th of January, the King came from Trianon, to see the Princesses; and designing to go back thither, left their apartment about three quarters after five, accompanied by his whole court, and by the Dauphin. Damiens had hid himself in a little hollow at the bottom of the stairs, near the archway. At the instant that the King was stepping into the coach, leaning on the Count of Brionne, the grand Equery, and the Marquis of Beringhen, First Equerry, the coach door being open, the assassin rushed into the midst of the croud of courtiers, and in his way run against the Dauphin, whom he jostled, as likewise the Duke of Ayen, Captain of the Guards-du-corps upon duty; then laying violent hands on the King's person, and putting one of them on his shoulder, he with the other stabbed him in the right side, just at the fifth rib, with a knife made pen-knife fashion. The King immediately said, *I have had a furious stroke given me:* then passing his hand under his cloaths, and drawing it back all bloody he cried out he was wounded. At that instant he turned about, and perceiving Damiens, who had his hat upon his head (which he had never taken off, though bid, before the blow, to do it, when he answered, *it is my way*) he said, *there is the man who struck me, let him be seized, and no harm done to him:* and then his Majesty immediately went up to his apartment.

This is not the place to express the consternation, the horror, the affliction with which the whole people were seized on the news of this execrable attempt; nor how great their consolation was,

was, when the next day they were assured, that his life was out of danger.

The villian was instantly seized by one of the King's footmen, and delivered up to the guards; who carried him into their hall, where he was stripped, searched, and the fatal knife was found upon him, with which he had committed the crime. This knife had two blades, the one a common one, pretty large, and pointed; the other, in the shape of a penknife, five or six inches long; he had had the time to wipe and shut it, for there was no blood to be seen upon it. There were also found upon him six or seven and thirty lewidores, some silver money, and a book entitled, *Christian prayers and Instructions*; the book he declared was given him by his brother at St. Omers. This was all that was found upon him worth notice.

From the first instant that he was in the hands of the King's guards, on the questions that were put to him, he said twice or thrice, *Let them take care of my Lord the Dauphin: do not let my Lord the Dauphin go out for the rest of the day.* Being pressed to impeach his accomplices, he said, *they were a great way off by this time, and out of reach; but that if he impeached them all would be over.* He also said, *that if four or five Bishops heads had been struck off, this would not have happened.*

In the midst of those extra-judicial interrogations, the zeal of those who put them to him, and their just horror of the villian, incited them to try to wring from him the impeachment of his accomplices, by dint of torture. They placed him near a violent fire, and pinched his feet about the ankles with red-hot tongs; but it was not long before they were sensible of the danger of thus torturing the criminal.

The Provost of the palace took the cause in hand, and confined him to the jail of Versailles, till further orders; and in the mean time care was taken to seize all the persons any way related to Damiens, as his father, wife, daughter, brother's and sister, Madam Ripandelly's maid who had let Damiens into the house, and others with whom he had connexions.

In the jail of Versailles, one Belot an exempt of the guards, being employed as a sweetener, by affecting to pity Damiens, wormed himself so far into his confidence, that he prevailed on him to dictate the following letter to the King, without date, which Damiens himself signed.

C O P Y of the L E T T E R.

S I R E,

" I am very sorry to have had the misfortune of approaching you;
 " but if you do not take your people's part, before many years are
 " over, you, and my Lord the Dauphin, and some others, will pe-
 " rish. It would be vexatious that so good a Prince, should, thro'
 " his oversondness for the Clergy, on whom he bestows his whole
 " confidence, not be sure of his life; and if you have not the
 goodness

“goodness to remedy the same in a little time, great misfortunes will happen, your kingdom not being in safety. [1] Unhappily for you, your subjects have given you their demission, the affair not proceeding but from them. And if you are not so good to your people, as to order the sacraments to be administered at the point of death, (they having been refused since your holding your Bed of Justice, upon which the court of Chatelet had the goods of a priest who had fled for it sold,) I repeat to you, that your life is not safe; the advice is very true, of which I take the liberty to inform you, by the officer who is the bearer hereof, in whom I have put all my confidence. The Archbishop of Paris is the cause of all this trouble, by his refusal of the sacraments. After the cruel crime that I have just committed upon your sacred person, the sincere confession which I take the liberty of making to you, makes me hope for clemency from your Majesty's goodness.

“Signed Damiens.

“P. S. I forgot to represent to your Majesty, that notwithstanding the orders you gave, that no harm should be done to me, [2] my Lord the Keeper of the Seals, had two pair of tongs heated for me in the guard-room; whilst he held me himself, and ordered two of the guards to burn my legs; which was executed, he promising them a reward; and also bidding them fetch two faggots, to make up the fire, for me to be thrown into it; and that without Mons. Le Clerc, who hindered their project, I should not have had the honour to furnish you the above information.

“Signed Damiens.”

Belot carried this letter, or having feigned to carry it to the King, returned with an answer, that his Majesty did not think his letter clear, and full enough, and therefore required further lights; and by this insinuation drew from Damiens a note of seven names as follow.

C O P Y of the N O T E.

- Messieurs Chagrange, second.
- Baisse de Lisse.
- De la Guionye.
- Clement.
- Lambert.
- The President De Rieux Bonnainvilliers.

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(1) The period beginning with unhappily, is the nearest the literal translation of the French that can be. “Par malheur pour vous, vos sujets vous ont donne leur demission, l'affaire ne provenant que de leur part.” (Vol. I. p. 205.) The Judge could not get him to explain satisfactorily his meaning in it.

(2) This Lord Keeper, the prisoner then reproached with his being one of the authors of the national troubles, by his betraying the cause of the Parliament.

‘ *The President du Massy, (3) and almost all.*

‘ *He [the King] must re-instate his Parliament, and support it, with a promise to do nothing to the above-written and company.*

‘ *Signed Damiens.*’

It is here to be observed, that Belot proceeded very rashly, and unfairly in writing down the names of these men of high character and probity, on the dictating of this wretch; especially as he gave them in purely as persons whom he barely knew, being by Belot asked, if he knew any Counsellors of Parliament, and by no means as accomplices of his crime; and when he was sensible, by a question of Belot’s to that purpose, that such an use might be made of this note, as to charge, or at least render them suspected, even of criminal assemblies, he expressed the utmost sorrow, and would fain have had it again to have burnt it. He also bitterly complained of Belot’s teizing him out of the letter first written, by pretences of pity, by embraces and squeezes of the hand. But these Counsellors were not the only persons thus endeavoured to be brought into suspicion; there was some art used to suggest to him an accusation of the English, as may appear by the following interrogatories(4). (Page 165. Vol. II.)

Interrogatory 381. Whether he had made a voyage to England, and if his design was not to return thither from Dunkirk, the last time he was there.

Answer. He never was in England.

Inter. 382. Whether, in the different services he had passed through, he had not served foreigners especially the English?

Answer. He had not.

But, to resume the thread of the narrative, return we to the circumstance of Damien’s being confined in the jail of Versailles, from the cognizance of whose Provostship the King transferred the cause to the Parliament of Paris, with ratification of the proceedings,

(3) By almost all he meant, that almost all of the Parliament thought of the Clergy as he did.

(4) Considering that this criminal was of a character readily to seize any falsehoods, and to stand to them afterwards; that he was also often interrogated, as himself complained, when he was actually delirious, and his answers then taken down, nothing could be more cruel and unjust than to put such leading questions to him, which were so many snares for blackening the innocent; but which, however, weak and wicked as he was, he avoided until by dint of tortures he was at length prevailed on, towards the end of his trial, to name one Gautier, by whom he declared he had been instigated to the perpetration of this black act, and who, on examination, appeared to be perfectly innocent: though an over officiousness engaged the judges, on this wretch’s deposition, to order him a year’s confinement provisionally, for more matters to come against him: a strain of injustice happily unknown to the English laws.

ings, so far as they had been already carried on in the Provost's court.

The prisoner was accordingly, Jan. 17, 1757, removed under a strong guard from Versailles to the Conciergerie, where he arrived at two o'clock in the morning of the 18th.

The interesting charge of keeping this prisoner safe for judgment, made every possible human precaution to be taken against his escape, by strengthening the prison, by posting centinels, guards, &c. who patrolled constantly the night-rounds. On the inside of the Conciergerie, there were centinels placed from the entry to the court in which stands the tower of Montgomery. At the bottom of this tower was placed a small corps-de-guard of twelve soldiers, who served to relieve the centinels within. All along the stairs of the said tower there were also posted centinels at proper distances. In the first story was the room in which Damiens was confined. This room is round, and may be about twelve feet broad, every way; receiving no light but through two casemates, or false windows, from eight to nine inches in breadth, by three feet in height. These openings are secured with double bars, and defended from the weather only by moveable frames with oil paper. There was in this room, neither chimney nor fire, but it was sufficiently warmed by a stove placed in the guard-room beneath it, and by the candles continually burning in the room. At first, they used tallow candles, but afterwards, by the advice of the physicians, for the preserving the wholesomeness of the air, they burnt none but wax.

The bed of the prisoner was disposed as follows: the head of the bed fronted the door exactly, at the distance of three feet from the wall. The bed was placed on a bed-stead raised about six inches from the ground, and mattresses round, so as to project six inches beyond the bed-stead. The bed's head was in the whole breadth raised three feet above the bolster, and was likewise mattressed; being so contrived, with springs, to raise or lower, according as the convenience of the prisoner should require it. In this bed he was fastened by an assemblage of strong leather straps, two inches and an half broad. These straps kept his shoulders confined, and were on each side of the bed, made fast to two rings stapled to the floor. Two other straps formed a ligature for each of his arms, and were connected by another placed on the breast-bone; and these two branches formed a sort of hand-cuff, that left the hand and arm no liberty, but as directed to the mouth. These straps were likewise tied, at their ends, to two rings secured as the first. Two straps of the same form also confined his thighs, and were tied in like manner; so that from each side of the bed came three branches of straps. Besides these, that which was placed on the breast, descending to the feet formed a sort of surcingle, and was tied at the foot of the bed to a ring in the middle of the floor; the strap too which secured his shoulders was fastened in like manner over the bed's head, to a ring stapled in the floor like the rest. Under

the arms and hands of the prisoner was spread a large carpet of hide, that he might not contract any inflammatory heat, or excoriation.

These precautions had appeared necessary, because in the jail of Versailles, the criminal had tried means to make away with himself. It was also in consequence of the like precautions that when Damiens was set down out of the coach that had brought him from Versailles to the Conciergerie, he was wrapped up in a sort of hammock, to hinder him, by any sudden motion, from running his head against the walls of the stair-case, which is very narrow. The same caution was used on the close of the process, and when he was brought to receive his sentence.

Besides these precautions, twelve of the most discreet and sensible serjeants of the regiment of guards were chosen; four of which relieved one another every four hours, and were successively day and night in the room with him. The eight others were posted in an apartment immediately over him, and ready on the least call, or noise, with their assistance. These twelve serjeants never stirred all the time out of Montgomery's tower, but with the prisoner; and they alone with the officer of the guard, which was every day relieved, had liberty to speak to him; and even to them it was enjoined, rather to hear him than to talk to him.

As the sores which the burning him at Versailles had bred, could not be healed till after more than two months, he was all that time in bed, without getting up, but for indispensable bodily necessities. For his personal service were also selected four of the most discreet soldiers who did the office of infirmarists, and who never left him, nor had any communication but with the serjeants before-mentioned.

As to his nourishment, that was given in charge to one of the officers of the kitchen, who prepared his victuals according to a regimen prescribed by the physicians, and before what he was to eat was set before him, it was always tasted by a surgeon who constantly slept in the prison. The care of his health was committed to Mons. Boyer, a physician, and to Mons. Foubert, a surgeon, both of them ordinaries of the Parliament. They visited him three times a day, dressed his wounds, and reported his situation to the first President of the Parliament every morning.

He was in this condition when the commissaries went to interrogate him, on the 18th of January. This first interrogatory was not closed till the 17th of March following, during which interval they had four other sittings on the same interrogatory, some of which lasted six or seven hours.

Whilst this process was going on, a discovery was made by chance, on the 22d of January at Madam Ripandelly's, of a canvas bag, which, without the knowledge of his wife and daughter, Damiens had hidden on the mantle-piece of the kitchen-chimney, in which were 1206 livres, (about 50 guineas) in Lewis d'ores, and double Lewis d'ores, and one crown-piece in silver. For
leaving

leaving which there, Damiens gave the following reason; that knowing his wife would not receive or take charge of that sum, he intended to have acquainted her with it by letter, that she might make restitution of it to Monf. Michel, as being part of what he had stolen from him.

During this trial numbers of persons were brought into trouble on suspicion, grounded on words lightly dropped by madmen, and even from girls of thirteen years of age, and on malicious informations, all too tedious, and too impertinent to the affair of Damiens himself to need particularizing here.

On the 26th of March, the process of examination and conviction being closed, the Attorney-General insisted in his conclusions against Damiens, that he should be condemned to the same pains as Ravaillac underwent on the like account; that he should, previously to his suffering death, be put to the torture, and that judgement against the others accused, should be suspended till his execution was over. To all which the court agreed.

It may be necessary to observe, that in one of the preceding sittings, it being foreseen, that Damiens would be put to the torture, it was agitated what kind of torture should be used on this occasion. Sundry memorials and instructions had been put into the Attorney-General's hands, relative thereto, and the whole of them was communicated to the physicians and surgeons of the court, who were unanimous in their opinion, that of all the methods of torture, the least dangerous to life, and the least susceptible of accidents, was that commonly employed by the Parliament, and known by the name of *La question des Brodequins*; and in Scotland, where it seems it was once in use, by the name of *the Boot*. The said physicians and surgeons then communicated the result of of their *profound* and *humane* studies for prolonging the pain, and for rendering it the most excruciating that could be, without the hazard of the criminal's sinking under its violence, of his losing his senses and understanding, or of his baulking, by death, the plan of the final tortures prepared for him.

This practice was then adopted, though in the sentence there was no other specification of it, than that he should be put to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary.

It is also to be observed, that though the constant custom be, never to grant a confessor to the criminal till after his condemnation, nevertheless, in consideration of the importance of this case, and in the hope of obtaining through sentiments of religion and repentance, those confessions they had not hitherto been able to wring from the criminal's mouth, it was determined, that Monf. Gueret, Curate of St. Paul, in Paris, and Doctor of the Sorbonne, should be engaged to attend Damiens, and to try to move him to a discovery. In consequence of which he attended him from Monday the 21st of January, and every day redoubled his care and visits till the moment of his execution, and even during the execution itself.

Things were in this situation, when Damiens appeared on the stool of examination, before his judges, on Saturday the 26th, at half an hour after eight in the morning. He betrayed no symptom of confusion at the sight of this august assembly; but looked round at the whole audience; recollected, and named, several of his judges; and preserved a singular presence of mind and resolution; even allowing himself the liberty of several shrewd repartees and pleasantries. The close of his interrogatory on this day is too curious to omit. (Vol. III. page 325.)

Interr. 165. Being asked, who had made him believe that it was a meritorious action to kill the King?

Ans. That his intention was not to kill him; and has nothing further to answer thereon.

166. Being asked how he could imagine that he could stab the King in such a manner as only to wound, and not kill him? [He had under preceding interrogatories, averred, that he intended the blow only for a warning to the King, for his future better government?]

Ans. That if he had plunged the knife three quarters of an inch higher, he had killed him.

167. Being asked what precaution he had taken to stab the King just in that part he had stabbed him in?

Ans. That if he had formed an intention to kill the King, no body could have hindered him from giving him several stabs.

168. It was remonstrated to him, that the answer he had just made, stood falsified by what himself had said, under precedent interrogations, when he owned, that the whole horror of the crime had presented itself to his mind, on the instant of his committing it; that his legs had failed him, and that he scarce knew where he was.

Ans. That since he had the time to shut his knife, and put it up in his pocket, he must probably know where he was.

169. It being remonstrated to him that his answer evidently proves the confusion of head in which he was; and that he would not have failed of taking off his hat, and of availing himself of the time he had to escape, if his mind had been free.

Ans. That he had nothing more to say on that head. [He had before said, that though what he had done was for the sake of religion, the Virgin Mary had deserted him, by his not having it in his head to take his hat off: which circumstance was alone the occasion of his being marked, and seized.]

170. It was represented to him, that his confusion and obstinacy in not declaring from what principles he judged his action a meritorious one, is a proof that he is bound by some terrible oath, not to reveal the poisoned spring from which he drew such a principle.

Ans. He has nothing to answer on that point.

171. Being required to declare, how he came to believe, that his crime would make the national disturbances cease?

Ans.

Ans. That he had no intention to kill the King, but to let him know the enemies he had in his court.

172. Being asked, how he could have thereby let the King know his enemies?

Ans. That the King had never listened to any of the remonstrances that had been made to him.

173. It being remonstrated to him, that his action must then have been intended to punish him for not listening to such remonstrances.

Ans. That it was not *Him* who ought to have been punished. On this Damiens was ordered to be withdrawn.

Monday, March 28. At seven o'clock in the morning, the criminal was carried up to the torture-room. From that moment he ceased to be under custody of the French guards, and, according to custom, it was the Lieutenant of the Short-robe of the Chatelet who had charge of him.

The Recorder read the sentence to the criminal, who heard it through with attention and intrepidity, and, on raising himself, said, that the day would be a sharp one.

A little before eight o'clock, six of the Commissaries being assembled in the torture-room, the criminal was placed on the stool, and underwent his last interrogatory, which lasted near an hour and an half, Damiens all the time preserving his usual firmness. That over, the executioners of justice began to put the legs of the criminal into the boot, and the ropes were tightened with more rigour than had ever been practised; and perhaps this is the most exquisitely painful moment of that whole torture. Damiens began to send forth the most piercing cries, and seemed even to faint away; but the physicians and surgeons, who are always present at the torture, on examination, knew that the swooning was not real. Damiens asked to drink; and they gave him water, but he insisted on having some wine in it, saying, 'now or never strength is necessary.' It was not till half an hour afterwards that the first wedge was applied. They had let this interval elapse in order to have the numbness got over, which commonly follows the violent compression of the ligature, and that the sensibility might be at its height; and indeed at the application of the first wedge, Damiens made dreadful outcries, but without passion, or any indecent word. During the same, the First President renewed his interrogatories, and principally with respect to accomplices; and having asked him who induced him to commit the crime, he cried out, 'It is Gautier.' (This was the first moment of his ever mentioning him.) Being asked who Gautier was, he told; as also where he lived; and charged him with having used very criminal expressions, in presence of Mons. le Maitre de Ferrieres, whose affairs this man managed, and lodged at his house. Upon this declaration, the Commissaries gave orders to the Lieutenant of the Short-Robe to bring away directly before them, in that room, the said De Ferrieres and Gautier. Whilst they were gone for, the torture continued

ed with intervals of a quarter of an hour between the driving of each wedge, at every one of which Damiens renewed his shrieks and outcries. [At the eighth and last wedge he cried out, 'Why had I so weak a head, the King being so mild and good a Prince?'] The most home and pressing interrogations imaginable were all the while put to him; and after having remained two hours and an half under the torture, the physician and surgeon advised not to keep him longer in it, as it could not be done without danger of his life. Consequently he was untied, and placed upon the matress, where having heard the verbal process, and his answers, he persisted therein.

Soon after arrived successively Gautier, and *Monf. le Maitre de Ferrieres*. Gautier appeared first, with the countenance of a man surprized, but who knows himself innocent. When he heard the declaration made by Damiens concerning him his astonishment was excessive. He strongly denied all that was contained in it, and Damiens as firmly maintained it; upon which the Commissaries ordered Gautier to prison.

Next appeared *Monf. de Ferrieres*: this was a shocking circumstance for a man of his Birth; though he bore it with decency and modesty. He denied his having been present at the talk imputed to Gautier, and Damiens was less positive at this confrontation. Upon which the Commissaries dismissed *M. de Ferrieres*, and set him at liberty.

Whilst *Mess. de Ferrieres* and Gautier were waited for, Damiens had asked if he might not see again the Curate of St. Paul. He was sent for, and the Commissaries withdrawing, Damiens staid with him in the torture-room near an hour; after which he was carried down to the chapel of the Conciergerie, where the Curate of St. Paul put him into the hands of *Monf. de Marcilly*, Doctor of the Sorbonne, whose zeal had been often exercised on such occasions. An hour afterwards the Curate of St. Paul returned to the Conciergerie, and these two Divines jointly redoubled their spiritual care of the criminal.

Towards three o'clock, notice was given to the Commissaries, that every thing was ready for the execution: upon which they instantly repaired to the town-hall, preceded, according to custom, by the officers and archers of the Lieutenant of the Short-robe.

Several days before, there had been prepared, at the common place of execution, called the Greve, a space of one hundred feet square, surrounded with pallisades, and having no entrance open but in one corner, for the admission of the criminal, and for communication with the town-hall. This space was guarded on the inside by the Lieutenant of the Short-robe, (whose function on these occasions answers to that of the Sheriff in England,) and his company, and on the outside by the soldiers of the foot-watch, The horse-patrol was posted in the square of Veaux. The avenues of the Greve were lined at proper distances by detachments of the French guards, as also the way from the Hall of Justice to the Church

church of Notre-dame. There were also corp-de-guards stationed at all the quarters and principal street-ends of the town. In short, all the necessary precautions were taken to secure the public order and tranquillity.

The criminal being arrived at the church of Notre-dame, he acquitted himself of the ceremony of the *amende honorable*, in the form prescribed by his sentence, with an air of contrition and repentance. He was accompanied by the two divines before mentioned, who did not quit him till his last breath.

Being come to the Greve, he desired to speak with the Commissaries, who gave orders for him to be brought up to them in the town-hall, which he accordingly was. All the declaration he made to them, was no more than to ask pardon of the Archbishop for the injurious expressions he had used concerning him; to declare, that his wife and daughter were innocent, and to recommend them to the charity of the Commissaries; and, in fine, he declared, that in his crime there was neither plot or accomplice. Both the Commissaries and Divines united in exhortations to him, to avail himself of these last moments for discovering all he knew; but he persisted in averring that he had nothing more to declare. It is also to be observed, that during this time, the Divines had several times presented a crucifix to him, which he respectfully kissed.

The Commissaries seeing there was nothing more to be expected from the criminal's declarations, ordered him to be led back to the Greve. He waited there some considerable time, because the executioner had not been careful enough to have every thing ready; for which he was afterwards punished by commitment, for several days to the dungeon.

When Damiens was stripped, it was observed that he surveyed and considered all his body and limbs with attention, and that he looked round with firmness on the vast concourse of spectators.

Towards five o'clock he was placed on the scaffold which had been in the middle of the enclosed area, and was raised about three feet and a half from the ground; the length from eight to nine feet, and of about the same breadth. The criminal was instantly tied, and afterwards fastened by iron gyves, which confined him under the arms and above the thighs. The first torment he underwent, was that of having his hand burnt in the flame of brimstone: the pain of which made him send forth such a terrible cry as might be heard a great way off. A moment afterwards he raised his head, and looked for some time earnestly at his hand, without renewing his cries, and without expressing any passion, or breaking out into any imprecation. To this first torment succeeded that of pinching him with red-hot pincers, in the arms, thighs, and breasts. At each pinch he was heard to shriek in the same manner as when his hand was burnt. He looked and gazed at each wound, and his cries ceased as soon as the pinching was over. They afterwards poured boiling oil, and melted lead and rosin,

into every wound, except those of the breast, which produced in all those circumstances, the same effect as the two first tortures. The tenor of his articulated exclamations, at times were as follows: 'Strengthen me, Lord God; strengthen me! Lord God have pity upon me!--O Lord, my God, what do I not suffer!--Lord God, give me patience!'

At length they proceeded to the ligatures of his arms, legs, and thighs, in order to dismember him. This preparation was very long and painful, the cords, tightly tied, bearing grievously upon the fresh wounds. This drew new cries from the sufferer; but did not hinder him from viewing and considering himself with a strange and singular curiosity.

The horses having been put to the draught, the pulls were repeated for a long time, with frightful cries on the part of the sufferer: the extension of whose members was incredible, and yet nothing gave signs of the dismemberment taking place.

In spite of the straining efforts of the horses, which were young and vigorous, and, perhaps too much so, being the more restive and unmanageable for drawing in concert, this last torment had now lasted for more than an hour, without any prospect of its ending. The physician and surgeon certified to the Commissaries, that it was almost impossible to accomplish the dismemberment, if the action of the horses was not aided by cutting the principal sinews, which might, indeed, suffer a length of extension, but not be separated without an amputation. Upon this attestation the Commissaries sent an order to the executioner, to make such an amputation, with regard especially to the night coming on, as it seemed to them fitting that the execution should be over before the close of the day.

In consequence of this order, the sinews of the sufferer were cut at the joints of the arms and thighs. The horses then drew afresh, and after several pulls, a thigh and arm were seen to sunder from the body. Damiens still looked at this painful separation, and seemed to preserve some sense and knowledge after both thighs, and one arm, were thus severed from his body: nor was it till the other arm went away that he expired.

As soon as it was certain, that there was no life left, the body and scattered limbs were thrown into a fire prepared for that purpose near the scaffold, where they were all reduced to ashes.

The next day, after various formalities, in consequence of the execution, upon the conclusions of the Attorney-General, with regard to the family of Damiens, a sentence was issued, ordering his father, wife, and daughter to quit the kingdom immediately, and for ever; under pain of Death, if they were found in it. [It ought not here to be omitted, that the King of France had the charity, in consideration of the evident innocence of these unfortunate persons, and of the prejudices and difficulties they would have to encounter in order to gain a livelihood, to give each of them a small pension for life.] As to the brothers and sister, they were enjoined

enjoined to change their name, and the demolition of the house in which Damiens was born, was also ordered.

Thus with respect to Damiens himself, and his family, was this procedure ended, on the fair review of which it will appear, that the whole of this affair is cleared up, and that this attempt on the life of Lewis XV. was the result of nothing but the madness of a poor wretch, who (as it plainly appeared, in the course of the trial) ought long before to have been locked up in a madhouse[1]: so that whatever atrociousness there was in his crime, the detestation so justly due to it is entirely lost in the consideration of his being deprived of his senses; which rendered him rather an object of the deepest compassion, than of those infernal tortures at which humanity shudders, and can hardly admit of a case being possible to exist, wherein it could be allowable to use them, or to forget in any criminal his being a fellow-creature.

[1] *Besides his way of talking to himself, a number of depositions concurred to form a complete proof of his having been long out of his mind. Amongst others (Vol. II. p. 257) Madame de Sainte Rheuze, a lady to whom he had been servant, declared, that she had turned him away from having observed his madness; that, to specify one instance thereof, when he had the choice of several complete rooms to lodge in, he had chosen a garret almost wholly uncovered, into which it rained and snowed; that when the deponent wanted to send him on an errand, he would excuse himself on the pretence of vapours; that he would often look at himself in the glasses of the apartment; and that he was always talking to himself: but that, for the rest, she knew no other harm of him whilst he staid with her.*

In the deposition of Playoult (See page 61.) it is said, that Damiens charged him seriously with being a conjurer, because he had by him a wax taper with seven holes in it, which were the wax-chandler's mark. In short, there was hardly a deposition taken about him, that did not manifestly prove him to be downright mad.

On the VIRTUE of PATIENCE in this mortal Life [1].

EACH man has something to enjoy and bear;
And none may envy much his neighbours share.
Envy! the source of half the wretched feel,
And, where it strikes, the hardest wound to heal,
Yet, why repine at what my neighbours taste;
Since I in something else am just as blest?

To

[1] *An Extract from an Epistle to the Rt. Hon. Lord Masham, by Mrs. Jones. This Lady's elegant poetical Pieces make a Part of the two Volumes of Poems by eminent Ladies, published by the Printer hereof, price 3s. 3d.*

To me, perhaps, kind Heav'n indulgent grants
 The spirits, health, or limbs my neighbour wants;
 To me, no acres of paternal ground:
 To him, the spleen and fifty thousand pound:
 If doom'd severer trials to sustain,
 Some secret pow'r may blunt the edge of pain:
 The keen sensation use may reconcile,
 And added hope affliction's sting beguile.

Would you enquire why man's to suffer born,
 To feel his frailties, and his nature mourn;
 Why each has his peculiar ill assign'd,
 Some pain of body or some plague of mind;
 Some ling'ring malady for years endured;
 Some hopeless passion never to be cured:
 And why not rather temp'rate, wise, serene;
 Without, all healthful; and all peace within?
 Know, thankless man, that he, who rules the ball,
 In goodness infinite permits it all?
 For nat'ral evil, rightly understood,
 Works but the grand design, our moral good;
 And he unjustly of his lot complains,
 Who finds his strength proportioned to his pains.

This life, with pain and pleasure intermixt,
 Is but a state of trial for the next;
 A stage, in which, amid the varied scenes,
 Promiscuous, Cæsars tread with harlequins:
 Where none, of all the self admiring train,
 May chuse his part, or strut his hour again:
 Our bus'ness only, through the measur'd span,
 To act it well, and wisely as we can.

Pain was permitted, in the various part,
 To check the manners and chastise the heart;
 To blunt the appetite to moral ill;
 To curb, restrain, and rectify the will;
 To call us back from ev'ry wild pursuit;
 To clear the soil for virtue's plants to shoot;
 To move compassion for our neighbour's ill,
 And teach us where to weep from what we feel:
 To fix, to urge, the bus'ness of our span;
 To raise the hero, and to mend the man.

Strong trials must the headstrong temper break,
 As gentler methods oft' reclaim the meek:
 When lightnings flash, the most obdurate mind,
 Some efforts, sure, of penitence must find;
 Ev'n Felix trembles at a general doom,
 And owns the terrors of a world to come.

These are the ends for which afflictions came:
 To rouse our reason, and our passions tame;
 To set fair Virtue in her proper light,
 And fix the wavering attention right.

What tho' your part, amid the gen'ral scene,
 Too high or hard appear, too low or mean;
 Beset with wants; with cares and fears oppress;
 The sport of fortune, and of men the jest:
 Yet wait a-while, whatever chance befall,
 Heav'n's ways are equal, thine unequal all,
 Here, but a stranger's journeying for a space,
 To seek some sure, some distant resting-place;
 Some perils by the way we must endure,
 The cruel robber, and the night obscure;
 Yet, armed with patience, let us boldly dare,
 The end is certain, and the prospect fair.
 He, who proportions largely all our gain,
 Weighs ev'ry loss, and counts out every pain;
 Sees all our frailties, measures all our dust;
 In all he gives or takes supremely just:
 That Pow'r eternal will our steps besriend,
 And guide us safely to our journey's end;
 Where ev'ry pang, where ev'ry fear shall cease,
 And each immortal guest subside to peace:
 To him who suffer'd well will much be giv'n,
 And patience wear the brightest wreath in heav'n.

On the PRINCIPLE of HONOUR.

From the Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times.

BY the *principle of honour* is meant, "The desire of fame, or the applause of men, directed to the end of publick happiness." Now this great ambition, which in other times or nations hath wrought such wonderful effects, is no longer to be found among us. It is the pride of *equipage*, the pride of *title*, the pride of *fortune*, or the pride of *dress*, that have assumed the empire over our souls, and levelled ambition with the dirt. The honest pride of virtue is *no more*. A man who should go out of the common road of life, in pursuit of glory, and serve the publick at the expence of his ease, his fortune, or his pleasure, would be stared or laughed at in every fashionable circle, as a silly fellow, who meddled with things that did not belong to him; as an idiot, who preferred shadows to realities, and needless toil to pleasureable enjoyments. The Laurel wreath, once aspired after as the highest object of ambition, would now be rated at the market price of its materials, and derided as a *three-penny crown*, and if its modern substitutes, the ribbon or the coronet, be eagerly sought for, it is not that they are regarded as the distinctions of public virtue, but as the *ensigns of vanity and place*.

But

But what implies or proves the general extinction of the principle of honour, is a peculiar circumstance, which at first view seems to challenge praise. It hath been weakly attributed to the moderate and forgiving spirit of these times, that no age ever so patiently suffered its ruling follies to be laughed at. But this, in truth, is a superficial and inadequate representation, as well as solution, of the fact. We not only suffer our ruling vices and follies to be laughed at, but we cordially join in the laugh. Was there ever a juttier picture drawn, than of modern effeminacy and nonchalance in the characters of *Fribble* and *Lord Chalkstone*? Did ever dramatic characters raise louder peals of laughter and applause, even among those who sat for the likenesses? They hear with pleasure, they acknowledge the truth of the representation, they laugh at the picture of their own follies; they go home, and *without a blush repeat them*. The truth is, therefore, that we can see and own our vices and follies, without being touched with shame: a circumstance which ancient times justly regarded as the strongest indication of degenerate and incorrigible manners.

It appears then, that the principle of honour is either lost, or totally corrupted: that no generous thirst of praise is left among us: that our ambitions are trifling and unmanly, as our pleasures: that wealth, title, dress, equipage, sagacity in gaming or wagers, splendid furniture and a table, are the sole fountains from which we desire to draw respect to ourselves, or applause from others: we aspire to folly, and are proud of meanness. Thus the principle of honour is perverted, and dwindled into unmanly vanity.

On the CONJUNCTION of the HOUSES of AUSTRIA and BOURBON; and the present Secret EXPEDITION.

From the CONTEST.

NOTWITHSTANDING the Conjunction between the two Houses of Austria and Bourbon is, in every Sense, unnatural, and repugnant to their real and permanent Interest, yet nevertheless, while they continue united, it is their immediate Interest, to pursue proper Measures for the successful Prosecution of their unjust Designs.

While these Powers separately pursue their real Interest, and remain as a Ballance against each other, the one will naturally oppose the undue Acquisitions of the other, and in that Case it appears equally absurd in us to attempt the aggrandizing of either, by intermeddling with continental Concerns.

But should either be in Danger of Destruction from the other, or should they, as in the present Case, unnaturally unite to invade the Liberties of Europe, it then becomes our immediate-Interest to throw all our Force in the Scale of Opposition.

Many

Many other Circumstances may arise, to make it necessary for us to engage in continental Connections: And they who declaim against them as always prejudicial, must certainly suppose the Policy of the different Courts of Europe, to co-operate with their own limited System.

Indeed if every other Nation pursued its real Interest, there would be no Necessity for our interfering on the Continent: But a corrupt Ministry in one Nation will unavoidably occasion others to vary their Plan of Operations. If a bad Minister influences his Master to pursue an immediate Advantage, to the Prejudice of a lasting Interest, it then becomes expedient for others to alter their System of Conduct, and to have Recourse to immediate Measures seemingly repugnant to those which were formerly thought most conducive to their permanent Advantage.

There is this Difference however to be observed---That where a State through the evil Council of its Ministers, or the Ambition of its Prince, acts offensively in Pursuance of some immediate Interest, there the immediate is generally compatible with, and ultimately destructive of, the permanent Interest.

But it is otherwise with States which act defensively: For although the accidental Measures, which Policy directs them to pursue, may appear to be immediately inconsistent with their general System, yet they have ultimately the same Tendency; since such accidental Expedients are only used to counteract the injurious Designs of the Aggressor, and to provide for their future Security, that they may be at Liberty to return to their general Plan, on which their permanent Benefit is supposed to depend.

If we may credit Appearances, we shall not hesitate to conclude, that the Heads of a neighbouring People, not very famous for their Contempt of Money, are become shameful Pensioners to the Court of France. These neutral lukewarm Politicians, must certainly know that their base Compliance with the Politics of Versailles and Vienna is against the Good of their Country; and that the highest Favour their State can expect in Return, is that which Polyphemus granted to Ulysses---which was---that of being devoured the last.

It is a peculiar Happiness therefore to a Nation, where the chief Officers of Government, are Proof against the Allurements of Avarice, and distinguished for their incorruptable Integrity. . . . Such Ministers demand the Confidence of their Fellow-Citizens; and we ought, at least, to be acquainted with their Measures, before we presume to censure their Conduct. But it is the Nature of Englishmen, to be proud of their Forecast, and to anticipate Events. Every Englishman is a Politician by Birthright, and a Prime Minister in Speculation. If Troops are in Motion, immediately the idle Swarm of itinerant Statesmen run panting from Coffee-house to Coffee-house, and with rueful Sadness of Countenance, prophetically limit the Place of Destination.

This buzzing Fry of political Insects, if you will believe them, ground all their melancholy Reflections on Facts they have received from

from the undoubted Authority of some noble Lord, or great Commoner. The last Account they hear, has, with them, the Validity of the Gospel; and they will quarrel, even with the Shadow of Contradiction: For they are, generally speaking, as blind as Beetles, and as vindictive as Wasps.

The present military Preparations, have afforded ample Subject of Speculation, to the purblind Omniscients. Says one—"I think it a great Shame to send our brave British Troops into Germany;" and I am informed that they are going thither by one who is in the Secret of Affairs."—Pardon me, Sir," says another—"I was told by a worthy Friend of mine, who is Hand and Glove with a certain great Man, that they are designed for America; and it is a hard Case to send Troops, who stood the Brunt at Minorca, and have not been at Home for some Years, on such cruel Service."—"Excuse me, Sir," says a third—"I had a Tete a Tete this Morning with the Admiral who is to have the Command, and I am well assured that they are destined for Brest; and I think it is a great Pity to send such fine Fellows, on such a Fool's Errand."

Other various Conjectures, Sir, are formed by these impertinent Tinklers, who know every Thing, and nothing. And who, content with assuming the ridiculous Importance of being privy to every Undertaking, think it an Addition to their Consequence, to appear discontented with every Enterprize, and to arraign the Conduct of the Minister, for presuming to hazard an Expedition before they have given him Assurance of its Success.

For my own Part, Sir, whether these Forces are destined for Westphalia or Prussia, Domingo or Martinico, Corsica or Leghorn, Brest or Babylon, I will not venture to determine. I am of Opinion however that we have too long, and too unsuccessfully, acted upon the defensive; it appears to me therefore absolutely necessary, for us to risk Something, by acting as Assailants in our Turn: And I have that Confidence in our Managers, that I trust our Troops will not be wantonly, or injudiciously employed.



END of NUMBER I.